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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/688,001	10/14/2000	Michael T. Dobbertin	2000009	9174
7590	03/08/2004		EXAMINER	
			BOLLINGER, DAVID H	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3653	

DATE MAILED: 03/08/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/688,001	DOBBERTIN ET AL. <i>SN</i>
Examiner	Art Unit	
David H Bollinger	3653	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 January 2004.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 14 October 2000 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
  1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.   |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>16</u> . | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
|   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.                                   |

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1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshida et al '066 in view of Jantsch et al.

Yoshida et al shows the timed operation of a vacuum belt feeder which includes first opening a valve 13 (at c) and a positive pressure air valve 22 (at a), closing the pressure air valve (at b), driving the belt feeder (14), closing the vacuum (at d), and then turning off the drive to the belt. Yoshida et al '066 fails to teach the vacuum can run after de-energizing the belt or that the belt can be energized and de-energized by way of a clutch. Merely having the vacuum of Yoshida et al '066 run until after the feed belt is de-energized would require mere choice or expedience sine it would appear that the apparatus run equally well with the

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vacuum turned off after the belt (14) is de-energized. Further, to have the feed belt activated and deactivated by way of a clutch would require the mere choice of a known means of controlling the movement of the belt as made obvious by the teachings of Jantsch et al. Note 56 and column 5 lines 30-46 of Jantsch et al.

4. Claims 1 through 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshida et al '066 in view of Jantsch et al as applied to claim 5 above, and further in view of Watkiss.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have the positive air pressure from valve 22 of Yoshida et al '066 delivered in pulses in order to aid in the separation of the sheets from the stack as made obvious by the teachings of Watkiss. Note the air blast from nozzles 72 and column 5 lines 6-30 of Watkiss. In regard to claims 2-3 merely having the air pressure separator (at a of 22 of Fig. 34) of Yoshida et al '066 actuated at the same time as the vacuum is actuated (at 13 c of Fig. 34) would require mere choice or expedience since the apparatus of Yoshida et al '066 could work equally well with this type of timed operation. With regard to claims 3 and 4 to have the time between the closing of valve 22 (at b) and the activation of the feed belt 14 of Yoshida et al '066 to be approximately 50 milliseconds would require mere choice or expedience based on the timing and feed rate of the sheets being fed.

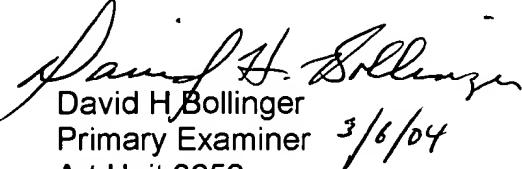
5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David H Bollinger whose telephone number is 703-308-

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1113. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Donald Walsh, can be reached on 703-306-4173. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
David H. Bollinger  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3653  
3/6/04